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ABERDEEN ADOPTS 2017 BUDGET WITH NO RATE INCREASE

ABERDEEN, N.J. (5/24/17) -- At its May 18th meeting, the Aberdeen Township Council unanimously adopted a \$19.53 million budget for 2017 that leaves the municipal tax rate at 0.536, unchanged from 2016. With that, the annual municipal tax on a typical home assessed at \$285,000 will remain \$1,527.60.

Mayor Fred Tagliarini attributed the zero-rate increase in part to the benefits of fees from multiple redevelopment projects now under way in the township. Other contributing factors included lower financing costs arising from successful efforts to refinance bonds at lower interest rates as well as the township's moves to make larger down-payments on capital projects.

"We are also proud to report that no municipal services or capital projects had to be cut to maintain the rate, and the surplus will be approximately \$500,000," Mayor Tagliarini said.

Highlights of the 2017 capital budget include the previously announced Woodfield Sewer Project and the re-imagined Veterans Memorial Park at Cliffwood Beach, as well as the new Neighborhood Park Improvement Program.

"The Neighborhood Park program will bring a variety of enhancements to two to three venues per year, beginning with Andover, Deerfield and Midland Parks later this year, which will be funded in part by a \$150,000 grant from Monmouth County," said Councilman Joseph Martucci, who served on the Council's capital budget committee along with Mayor Tagliarini and Deputy Mayor Margaret Montone. "We will apply for grants every year for this program."

On the expenditures side, Mayor Tagliarini noted that efforts to keep costs contained and maintain services for residents were underscored by the Council's successful work with the Aberdeen Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA) to adjust the salary step-guide so it takes longer for newly-hired officers to reach the top salary step.

"Our agreement with the PBA to stretch the salary guide will allow us to hire five additional officers to cover increasing demands by our new redevelopment projects, while at the same time, reducing police salaries over the next 15 years by over \$300,000," said Councilman Greg Cannon. "We are especially grateful to PBA President Mike Plant, who brought this proposal to the membership and was able to get a unanimous vote to open the contract, demonstrating the dedication of our police to our community."

In all, the 2017 municipal tax rate is based on a total net valuation for all properties in the township of \$2.08 billion, up 2.5% from \$2.03 billion in 2016. "A consistently increasing base helps to equalize any tax increases, and when our redevelopment projects are completed, those increased valuations from old factories to new construction will help further stabilize the Township's tax rate," Deputy Mayor Montone said.

Township Manager Holly Reycraft noted that the 2017 Levy Cap is \$157,312 under the maximum allowable amount to be raised by taxation. "This is the statue that is referred to as the '2% CAP.' We have always been under the 2% levy CAP since the law was passed in 2010," she reported.

“In closing, I’d like to thank Township Manager Holly Reycraft, Chief Financial Officer Angela Morin, our department heads and the Township Council for their hard work on this budget,” Mayor Tagliarini said. “Once again, this was a true team effort aimed at delivering the best services for our residents at the lowest possible cost.”

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